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**Abstract Title:**

***The Insect State: Development, Politics and Capital in African Desert Locust Control***

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**Abstract:**

The African Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) has presented a long (indeed deeply historical) problem for producers throughout northern and western Africa. Gestating in isolated settings in the Sahara for extended periods, populations of the insect periodically increase in density, change behavior and morphology, and take to the air in swarms that consume crops and pasture over hundreds of thousands of square kilometers, moving across dozens of countries, spanning the range of the Mediterranean to the Congo. This paper reviews analysis by an international multidisciplinary team of researchers to examine and explain the political and economic barriers to locust control in the region. The conclusions suggest that: (1) the bifurcated resolution and extent of the insect's ecology - from its isolated solitary condition to its continental scale gregarious condition - are mismatched to the institutional scalar capacities of the modern nation state; but that (2) governmental and international institutions have become adapted to the cycles of locust outbreaks, leveraging these to capture, control, and absorb development resources on a massive scale.

**Keywords:**

agriculture; insects; pesticides; political ecology; West Africa